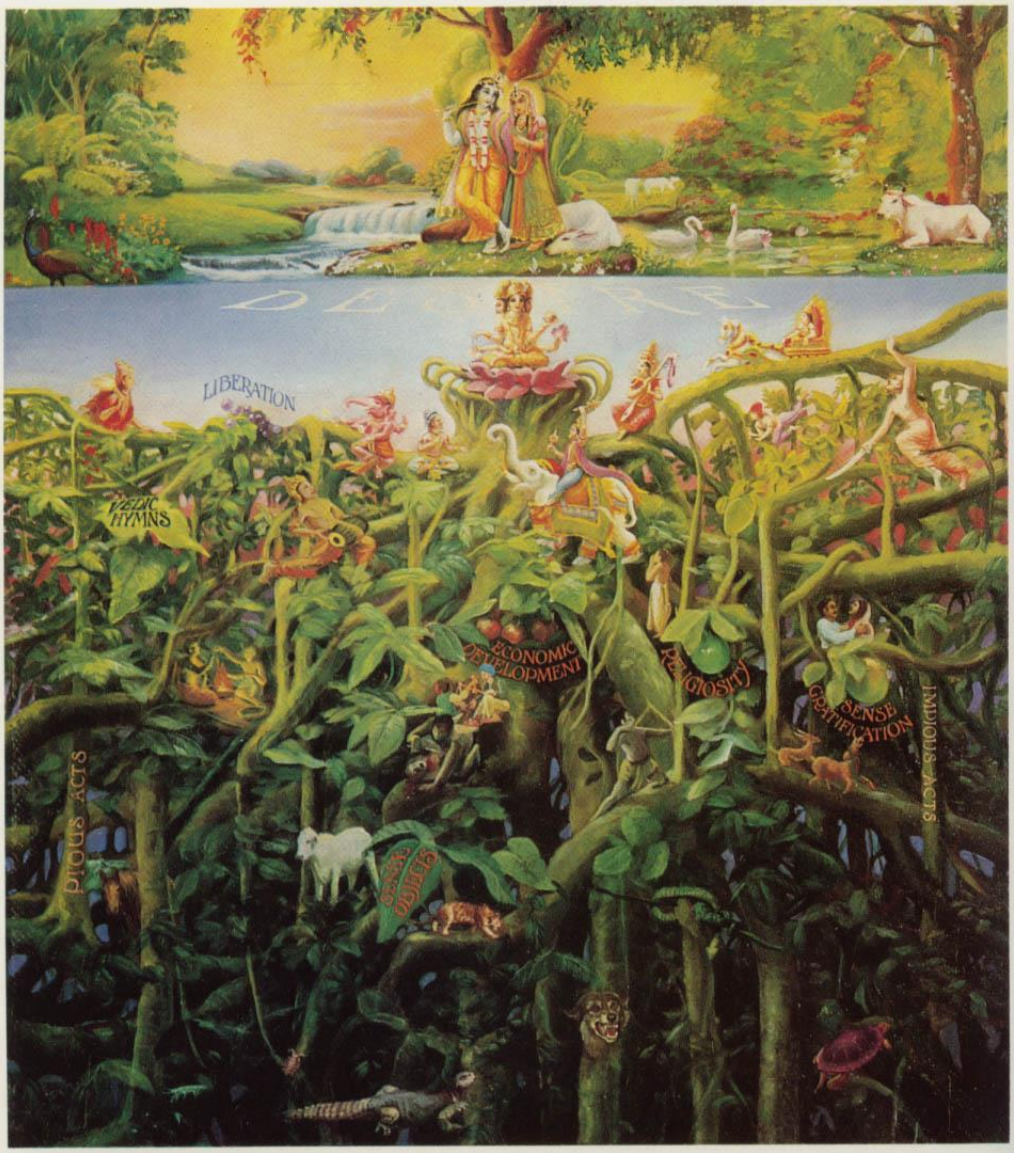

Plate 41 The entanglement of this material world, a perverted reflection of the spiritual world, is compared to a banyan tree. *(pp.227–228)*

Chapter 15: The Yoga of the Supreme Person

TEXT 1

sri-bhagavan uvaca
urdhva-mulam adhah-sakham
asvattham prahur avyayam
chandamsi yasya parnani
yas tam veda sa veda-vit

SYNONYMS

sri bhagavan uvaca—the Supreme Personality of Godhead said; *urdhva-mulam*—with roots above; *adhah*—downwards; *sakham*—branches; *asvattham*—banyan tree; *prahuh*—said; *avyayam*—eternal; *chandamsi*—Vedic hymns; *yasya*—of which; *parnani*—the leaves; *yah*—anyone; *tam*—that; *veda*—knows; *sah*—he; *veda-vit*—the knower of the Vedas.

TRANSLATION

The Blessed Lord said: There is a banyan tree which has its roots upward and its branches down and whose leaves are the Vedic hymns. One who knows this tree is the knower of the Vedas.

PURPORT

After the discussion of the importance of *bhakti-yoga,* one may question, "What about the *Vedas*?" It is explained in this chapter that the purpose of Vedic study is to understand Krsna. Therefore one who is in Krsna consciousness, who is engaged in devotional service, already knows the *Vedas.*

The entanglement of this material world is compared here to a banyan tree. For one who is engaged in fruitive activities, there is no end to the banyan tree. He wanders from one branch to another, to another, to another. The tree of this material world has no end, and for one who is attached to this tree, there is no possibility of liberation. The Vedic hymns, meant for elevating oneself, are called the leaves of this tree. This tree's roots grow upward because they begin from where Brahma is located, the topmost planet of this universe. If one can understand this indestructible tree of illusion, then one can get out of it.

This process of extrication should be understood. In the previous chapters it has been explained that there are many processes by which to get out of the material entanglement. And, up to the Thirteenth Chapter, we have seen that devotional service to the Supreme Lord is the best way. Now, the basic principle of devotional service is

detachment from material activities and attachment to the transcendental service of the Lord. The process of breaking attachment to the material world is discussed in the beginning of this chapter. The root of this material existence grows upward. This means that it begins from the total material substance, from the topmost planet of the universe. From there, the whole universe is expanded, with so many branches, representing the various planetary systems. The fruits represent the results of the living entities' activities, namely, religion, economic development, sense gratification and liberation.

Now, there is no ready experience in this world of a tree situated with its branches down and its roots upward, but there is such a thing. That tree can be found beside a reservoir of water. We can see that the trees on the bank reflect upon the water with their branches down and roots up. In other words, the tree of this material world is only a reflection of the real tree of the spiritual world. This reflection of the spiritual world is situated on desire, just as the tree's reflection is situated on water. Desire is the cause of things' being situated in this reflected material light. One who wants to get out of this material existence must know this tree thoroughly through analytical study. Then he can cut off his relationship with it.

This tree, being the reflection of the real tree, is an exact replica. Everything is there in the spiritual world. The impersonalists take Brahma to be the root of this material tree, and from the root, according to *sankhya* philosophy, come *prakrti, purusa,* then the three *gunas,* then the five gross elements *(panca-mahabhuta),* then the ten senses *(dasendriya),* mind, etc. In this way they divide up the whole material world. If Brahma is the center of all manifestations, then this material world is a manifestation of the center by 180 degrees, and the other 180 degrees constitute the spiritual world. The material world is the perverted reflection, so the spiritual world must have the same variegatedness, but in reality. The *prakrti* is the external energy of the Supreme Lord, and the *purusa* is the Supreme Lord Himself, and that is explained in *Bhagavad-gita.* Since this manifestation is material, it is temporary. A reflection is temporary, for it is sometimes seen and sometimes not seen. But the origin from whence the reflection is reflected is eternal. The material reflection of the real tree has to be cut off. When it is said that a person knows the *Vedas,* it is assumed that he knows how to cut off attachment to this material world. If one knows that process, he actually knows the *Vedas.* One who is attracted by the ritualistic formulas of the *Vedas* is attracted by the beautiful green leaves of the tree. He does not exactly know the purpose of the *Vedas.* The purpose of the *Vedas,* as disclosed by the Personality of Godhead Himself, is to cut down this reflected tree and attain the real tree of the spiritual world.

Chapter 15: The Yoga of the Supreme Person

TEXT 2

adhas cordhvam prasrtas tasya sakha
guna-pravrddha visaya-pravalah
adhas ca mulany anusantatani
karmanubandhini manusya-loke

SYNONYMS

adhah—downward; *ca*—and; *urdhvam*—upward; *prasrtah*—extended; *tasya*—its; *sakhah*—branches; *guna*—modes of material nature; *pravrddhah*—developed; *visaya*—sense objects; *pravalah*—twigs; *adhah*—downward; *ca*—and; *mulani*—roots; *anusantatani*—extended; *karma*—according to work; *anubandhini*—bound; *manusya-loke*—in the world of human society.

TRANSLATION

The branches of this tree extend downward and upward, nourished by the three modes of material nature. The twigs are the objects of the senses. This tree also has roots going down, and these are bound to the fruitive actions of human society.

PURPORT

The description of the banyan tree is further explained here. Its branches are spread in all directions. In the lower parts, there are variegated manifestations of living entities, such as human beings, animals, horses, cows, dogs, cats, etc. These are situated on the lower parts of the branches, whereas on the upper parts are higher forms of living entities: the demigods, Gandharvas (fairies), and many other higher species of life. As a tree is nourished by water, so this tree is nourished by the three modes of material nature. Sometimes we find that a tract of land is barren for want of sufficient water, and sometimes a tract is very green; similarly, where the modes of material nature are proportionately greater in quantity, the different species of life are manifested in that proportion.

The twigs of the tree are considered to be the sense objects. By development of the different modes of nature, we develop different senses, and, by the senses, we enjoy different varieties of sense objects. The source of the senses-the ears, the nose, eyes, etc.-is considered to be the upper twigs, tuned to the enjoyment of different sense objects. The leaves are sound, form, touch-the sense objects. The roots, which are subsidiary, are the by-products of different varieties of suffering and sense enjoyment. Thus we develop attachment and aversion. The tendencies toward piety and impiety are considered to be the secondary roots, spreading in all directions. The real root is from

Brahmaloka, and the other roots are in the human planetary systems. After one enjoys the results of virtuous activities in the upper planetary systems, he comes down to this earth and renews his *karma* or fruitive activities for promotion. This planet of human beings is considered the field of activities.

Chapter 15: The Yoga of the Supreme Person

TEXTS 3-4

na rupam asyeha tathopalabhyate
nanto na cadir na ca sampratistha
asvattham enam su-virudha-mulam
asanga-sastrena drdhena chittva
tatah padam tat parimargitavyam
yasmin gata na nivartanti bhuyah
tam eva cadyam purusam prapadye
yatah pravrttih prasrta purani

SYNONYMS

na—not; *rupam*—form; *asya*—of this tree; *iha*—in this; *tatha*—also; *upalabhyate*—can be perceived; *na*—never; *antah*—end; *na*—never; *ca*—also; *adih*—beginning; *na*—never; *ca*—also; *sampratistha*—the foundation; *asvattham*—banyan tree; *enam*—this; *suvirudha*—strongly; *mulam*—rooted; *asanga-sastrena*—by the weapon of detachment; *drdhena*—strong; *chittva*—by cutting; *tatah*—thereafter; *padam*—situation; *tat*—that; *parimargitavyam*—has to be searched out; *yasmin*—where; *gatah*—going; *na*—never; *nivartanti*—comes back; *bhuyah*—again; *tam*—to him; *eva*—certainly; *ca*—also; *adyam*—original; *purusam*—the Personality of Godhead; *prapadye*—surrender; *yatah*—from whom; *pravrttih*—beginning; *prasrta*—extension; *purani*—very old.

TRANSLATION

The real form of this tree cannot be perceived in this world. No one can understand where it ends, where it begins, or where its foundation is. But with determination one must cut down this tree with the weapon of detachment. So doing, one must seek that place from which, having once gone, one never returns, and there surrender to that Supreme Personality of Godhead from whom everything has begun and in whom everything is abiding since time immemorial.

PURPORT

It is now clearly stated that the real form of this banyan tree cannot be understood in this material world. Since the root is upwards, the extension of the real tree is at the other end. No one can see how far the tree extends, nor can one see the beginning of this tree. Yet one has to find out the cause. "I am the son of my father, my father is the

son of such and such a person, etc." By searching in this way, one comes to Brahma, who is generated by the Garbhodakasayi Visnu. Finally, in this way, when one reaches to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, that is the end of research work. One has to search out that origin of this tree, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, through the association of persons who are in the knowledge of that Supreme Personality of Godhead. Then by understanding one becomes gradually detached from this false reflection of reality, and by knowledge one can cut off the connection and actually become situated in the real tree.

The word *asanga* is very important in this connection because the attachment for sense enjoyment and lording it over the material nature is very strong. Therefore one must learn detachment by discussion of spiritual science based on authoritative scriptures, and one must hear from persons who are actually in knowledge. As a result of such discussion in the association of devotees, one comes to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Then the first thing one must do is surrender to Him. The description of that place whence going no one returns to this false reflected tree is given here. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krsna, is the original root from whom everything has emanated. To gain favor of that Personality of Godhead, one has only to surrender, and this is a result of performing devotional service by hearing, chanting, etc. He is the cause of this extension of this material world. This is already explained by the Lord Himself: *aham sarvasya prabhavah.* "I am the origin of everything."

Therefore to get out of the entanglement of this strong banyan tree of material life, one must surrender to Krsna. As soon as one surrenders unto Krsna, he becomes detached automatically from this material extension.

Plate 42 The spiritual and material worlds. *(p.230)*

TEXT 6

na tad bhasayate suryo
na sasanko na pavakah
yad gatva na nivartante
tad dhama paramam mama

SYNONYMS

na—not; *tat*—that; *bhasayate*—illuminates; *suryah*—sun; *na*—nor; *sasankah*—the moon; *na*—nor; *pavakah*—fire, electricity; *yat*—where; *gatva*—going; *na*—never; *nivartante*—comes back; *tat dhama*—that abode; *paramam*—supreme; *mama*—My.

TRANSLATION

That abode of Mine is not illumined by the sun or moon, nor by electricity. One who reaches it never returns to this material world.

PURPORT

The spiritual world, the abode of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krsna-which is known as Krsnaloka, Goloka Vrndavana-is described here. In the spiritual sky there is no need of sunshine, moonshine, fire or electricity, because all the planets are self-luminous. We have only one planet in this universe, the sun, which is self-luminous, but all the planets in the spiritual sky are self-luminous. The shining effulgence of all those planets (called Vaikunthas) constitutes the shining sky known as the *brahmajyoti.* Actually, the effulgence is emanating from the planet of Krsna, Goloka Vrndavana. Part of that shining effulgence is covered by the *mahat-tattva,* the material world. Other than this, the major portion of that shining sky is full of spiritual planets, which are called Vaikunthas, chief of which is Goloka Vrndavana.

As long as a living entity is in this dark material world, he is in conditional life, but as soon as he reaches the spiritual sky, by cutting through the false, perverted tree of this material world, he becomes liberated. Then there is no chance of his coming back here. In his conditional life, the living entity considers himself to be the lord of this material world, but in his liberated state he enters into the spiritual kingdom and becomes the associate of the Supreme Lord. There he enjoys eternal bliss, eternal life, and full knowledge.

One should be captivated by this information. He should desire to transfer himself to that eternal world and extricate himself from this false reflection of reality. For one who

is too much attached to this material world, it is very difficult to cut that attachment, but if he takes to Krsna consciousness, there is a chance of gradually becoming detached. One has to associate himself with devotees, those who are in Krsna consciousness. One should search out a society dedicated to Krsna consciousness and learn how to discharge devotional service. In this way he can cut off his attachment to the material world. One cannot become detached from the attraction of the material world simply by dressing himself in saffron cloth. He must become attached to the devotional service of the Lord. Therefore one should take it very seriously that devotional service as described in the Twelfth Chapter is the only way to get out of this false representation of the real tree. In Chapter Fourteen the contamination of all kinds of processes by material nature is described. Only devotional service is described as purely transcendental.

The words *paramam mama* are very important here. Actually every nook and corner is the property of the Supreme Lord, but the spiritual world is *paramam,* full of six opulences. In the *Upanisads* it is also confirmed that in the spiritual world there is no need of sunshine or moonshine, for the whole spiritual sky is illuminated by the internal potency of the Supreme Lord. That supreme abode can be achieved only by surrender and by no other means.

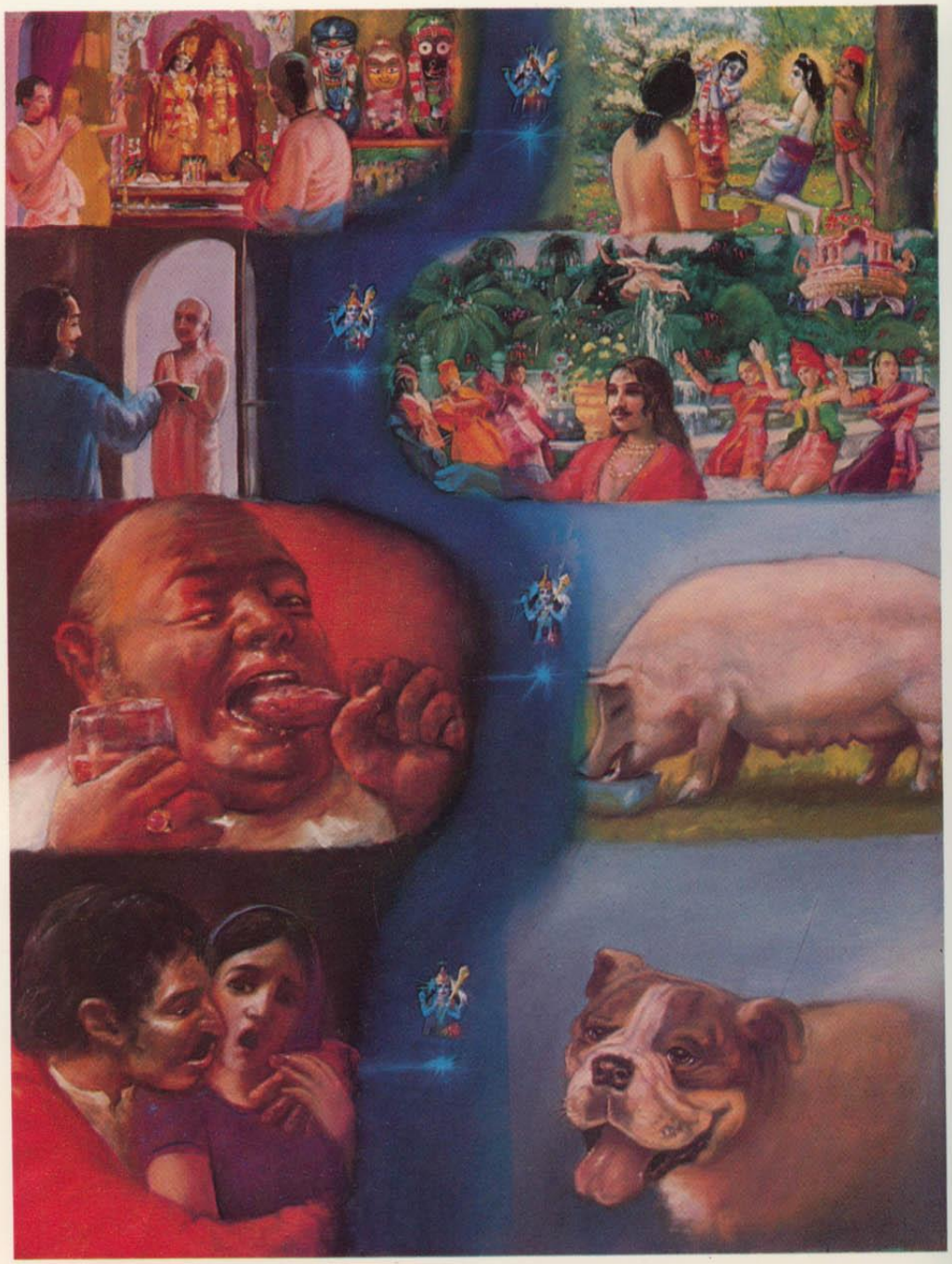

Plate 43 At the time of death the consciousness created by the living being will carry him to the next body. *(pp.230–231)*

TEXT 8

sariram yad avapnoti
yac capy utkramatisvarah
grhitvaitani samyati
vayur gandhan ivasayat

SYNONYMS

sariram—body; *yat*—as much as; *avapnoti*—gets; *yat*—that which; *ca*—also; *api*—virtually; *utkramati*—gives up; *isvarah*—the lord of the body; *grhitva*—taking; *etani*—all these; *samyati*—goes away; *vayuh*—air; *gandhan*—smell; *iva*—like; *asayat*—from the flower.

TRANSLATION

The living entity in the material world carries his different conceptions of life from one body to another as the air carries aromas.

PURPORT

Here the living entity is described as *isvara,* the controller of his own body. If he likes, he can change his body to a higher grade, and if he likes he can move to a lower class. Minute independence is there. The change his body undergoes depends upon him. At the time of death, the consciousness he has created will carry him on to the next type of body. If he has made his consciousness like that of a cat or dog, he is sure to change to a cat's or dog's body. And, if he has fixed his consciousness on godly qualities, he will change into the form of a demigod. And, if he is in Krsna consciousness, he will be transferred to Krsnaloka in the spiritual world and will associate with Krsna. It is a false claim that after the annihilation of this body everything is finished. The individual soul is transmigrating from one body to another, and his present body and present activities are the background of his next body. One gets a different body according to *karma,* and he has to quit this body in due course. It is stated here that the subtle body, which carries the conception of the next body, develops another body in the next life. This process of transmigrating from one body to another and struggling while in the body is called *karsati* or struggle for existence.